

observation or mine-sweeping or mine-laying; a wonderful train-ferry service across the Channel for guns, munitions, and stores; aeroplanes aloft and submarines below. Great merchant ships from all over the world steamed across prescribed lines of passage, transport ships with soldiers passed day and night without the loss of a man, other transports in unceasing stream carried munitions and food and supplies to armies of millions of men—all their war-action turned upon the ability of towering battleships with capacities reaching to 27,000 tons, with crews of over 1,000 men and a driving force of 60,000 horse-power, to hold the seas.

During these months and years the war-mariners of England bore a prolonged burden of disappointment. Nothing would induce the German Navy to risk an engagement such as the Fleets of all previous enemies in history had been compelled to accord the meteor flag of Britain. It would not leave its impregnable land-locked, Heligoland-guarded waterways. Sir David Beatty fought the gallant Battle of the Bight and risked almost certain destruction behind the shore defences of the Germans, and won through, but it was not possible a second time; German raiders and raiding fleets came out upon occasion and were openly encouraged to leave the land in the hope of putting the issue to a test. Finally, on May 31st and June 1st, 1916, an engagement did take place off Jutland on the coast of Denmark. The British Grand Fleet and the German High Seas Fleet met and fought for many hours. The Germans were close to their bases and had left them for objects not clearly defined. Warned of the British movements they may have expected to meet and destroy a part of the British Fleet before the rest could come up—as nearly happened; they may have been escorting cruisers which were to make a dash for the open sea and act as commercial destroyers; they may have intended an imposing raid on the British coast. As it was they lost ships of 119,200 tons at Sir John Jellicoe's current estimate; the British lost 113,300 tons according to the early statement of the Admiralty.

But the German fleet did not break through the cordon, they did not succeed in any of the possible objects mentioned, they did finally cut and run for their bases and British superiority of Naval strength remained, British control of the seas was emphasized, British skill and courage in this new and greater school of naval warfare vindicated. None-the-less the world was told by German news agencies that it was a great German victory and the Kaiser announced that: "The British fleet is beaten and British world-supremacy has disappeared forever." Two days afterwards the Admiralty report appeared but, meanwhile, a portion of the world, perhaps a willing portion, had received an impression of British